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Claims

1. A tripod (1) for supporting apparatus in general and, in particular, for optical or photographic apparatus and the like, comprising a spider (2), a pillar (8) arranged to be housed slidably with a stem (7) thereof in a through-hole (6) formed through the spider (2), and a head (4) arranged for receiving the apparatus, the head (4) being connected to a first end (7a) of the pillar (8), characterized in that, in the closed-up condition, that is, in the most compact condition of the tripod (1), the head (4) is at least partially housed inside the through-hole (6).
2. A tripod according to Claim 1, comprising means for adjusting the orientation of the head (4), the adjustment means being fixed to a second end (7b) of the stem (7), axially remote from the first end (7a).
3. A tripod according to Claim 1 or Claim 2 in which the head comprises a spherical element (15) and a collet (19) housed inside the stem (7) in the region of the first end (7a), the collet (19) being active on the spherical element (15) in order to clamp it selectively, relative to the stem.
4. A tripod according to Claim 3 in which the head (4) comprises a ring nut (17) mounted on the spherical element (15) and such that, when the tripod (1) is in the closed-up condition, the ring nut (17) is in abutment with the spider (2) and the spherical element (15) is housed inside the hole (6).
5. A tripod according to Claim 3 or Claim 4, comprising a sleeve (21) with a frustoconical opening (22), driven into the first end (7a) of the stem (7), the collet (19) being housed inside the sleeve (21) and cooperating with the frustoconical opening for the clamping of the spherical element.
6. A tripod according to one or more of Claims 3 to 5 in which the means for adjusting the orientation of the head (4) comprise a tie rod (23) associated, by means of a first (23a) of its ends, with the collet (19) in order, when tensioned, to lock the relative rotation of the spherical element (15) inside the collet (19).
7. A tripod according to Claim 6 in which the means for adjusting the orientation of the head (4) comprise a knob (27) in abutment with the second end (7b) of the stem (7), the tie rod (23) being disposed inside the stem (7) and being connected, by means of a second (23b) of its ends, to the knob (27), for the adjustment of the tensioning of the tie rod (23).
8. A tripod according to Claim 7 in which the knob (27) comprises a female thread (30) in which the second threaded end (23b) of the tie rod (23) is engaged by screwing, so that rotation of the knob (27) varies the tensioning of the tie rod (23) and consequently the clamping of the collet (19) onto the head (4).

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9. A tripod according to Claim 7 or Claim 8 in which the means for adjusting the orientation of the head (4) comprise a guide bush (25) driven into the second end (7b) of the stem (7), the tie rod (23) being guided in the bush (25) in a non-rotatable manner.

5 10. A tripod according to one or more of Claims 6 to 9 in which axial preloading means are provided on the tie rod (23), so that the tie rod (23) is tensioned, even when the knob (27) is fully slackened, ensuring a minimal clamping of the collet (19) onto the spherical element (15).

10 11. A tripod according to Claim 10 in which the preloading means comprise resilient means (31) interposed between the tie rod (23) and the bush (25).

12. A tripod according to one or more of the preceding claims, comprising means for locking the sliding of the pillar (8), the locking means including a brake (9) acting on the pillar (8).

15 13. A tripod according to Claim 12 in which the brake (9) comprises an operating lever (10) terminating in a cam-like eccentric element (11) operating on a pad (12) movable radially in a seat formed in the spider (2) in a manner such that the pressure of the pad (12) on the pillar (8) is determined by the position of the operating lever (10).

20 14. A tripod according to one or more of the preceding claims in which each of the legs (3) is articulated to the spider (2) by a respective first section (3a), by means of a respective appendage (34) projecting radially from an end of the first section (3a), without occupying space inside the section (3a).

25 15. A tripod according to Claim 14 in which the appendage (34) is formed integrally on a sleeve (40) fitted firmly on the first section, each appendage (34) being housed in a respective seat (36) formed in the spider for the articulation of the leg (3).

30 16. A tripod according to Claim 15 in which the appendage (34) and the seat (36) are provided with respective complementary restraining means by means of which the appendage (34) is rotatable but restrained axially in the seat (36).